

February 22, 1950

Notes from L.A. Leont'ev's February 1950 Meeting with Stalin

Citation:

"Notes from L.A. Leont'ev's February 1950 Meeting with Stalin", February 22, 1950, Wilson Center Digital Archive, RGASPI, fond 17, opis 133, delo 41, listy 5-6. Translated by Ethan Pollock. <https://wilson-center.drivingcreative.com/document/112275>

Summary:

A second meeting with Stalin and the editors of the political economy textbooks, in which Stalin outlines the distinction between the people's democracies of Eastern Europe and China.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

[Stalin:] There are two versions of the draft of the political economy textbook. But there are no fundamental differences between the versions either in their approach to questions of political economy or in the interpretation of these questions. It follows that there is not material for two versions. Leont'ev's version should be taken as the foundation.

The textbook should give concrete criticism of the theory of American imperialism. Use material that was published on this question in Bol'shevik and in Voprosy ekonomiki.¹

People not versed in economic relations will not make the distinction between the People's Republic of China and the people's democracies of Central and Eastern Europe, such as the People's Democratic Republic of Poland. Meanwhile, the Chinese and Polish people's democracies are dissimilar.

The people's democratic republics are typified by: 1) the dictatorship of the proletariat; 2) nationalization of industry; 3) the leadership role of the Communist and Workers' Party; and 4) the transition from building socialism in the city to building socialism in the country. In China, socialism doesn't exist in the cities or in the countryside. Some enterprises have been nationalized, but this is only a drop in the bucket. There are serious differences between the European people's democracies and the People's Republic of China. 1) In China there is a democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasants. 2) In China there was the burden of foreign bourgeoisie. Thus, the Chinese nationalist bourgeoisie was a part of the revolution. This allowed power to be held in coalition with the national bourgeoisie. 3) In China the problem of dealing with feudal relations remains. In this sense the Chinese Revolution is reminiscent of the French bourgeois revolution. 4) The peculiarity of the Chinese Revolution comes from the existence of the Communist Party. Therefore it is possible to say that in China there is a people's democratic republic that is still in the first phase of its development.

The fact that our cadres do not have strong education in economics explains the mess surrounding this question.

Pass the decision to form a committee of comrades Malenkov, Leont'ev, Ostrovitianov and Iudin² to rework the draft in one month.

¹ Bol'shevik was the official political and theoretical organ of the Central Committee. Voprosy ekonomiki was the main journal for economics and was published by the Institute of Economics of the Academy of Sciences.

² Later Iudin was named Soviet Ambassador to the People's Republic of China.